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THE INTERPOLATED CURSE

‘The motives which might prompt an actor to interpolate, and the methods he might use in interpolating, are very numerous’¹. PAGE discusses many such motivations and methods in his monograph, while freely admitting that more remain to be discovered. The purpose of this paper is to direct attention towards a type of discourse which is especially common in tragedy, and which, I believe, shows a tendency to encourage interpolation: namely, the curse.

From the dire affliction which lies on the house of Atreus in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, to the potent execrations uttered by Oedipus against his sons in Sophocles’ last play, curses provide some of the most memorable episodes in ancient drama. They are prominent from the earliest Greek literature (cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 1.37-42, Hipponax fr. 115 WEST)², and it is not hard to see why. The curse is an example of a ‘speech act’, an utterance which does not describe an action, but rather accomplishes it simply through being spoken. Its aim is generally the destruction of another human being through a mysterious force harnessed by the spoken word. A character has no mightier means of utterance than the curse, no other way of voicing his most passionate and destructive

I am grateful to Professor Christopher Collard and to the Editors of *Hermes* for helpful comments, and to Mr L. B. T. Houghton for checking a brace of references for me in the Cambridge University Library.

¹ D. L. PAGE, *Actors’ Interpolations in Greek Tragedy*, Oxford 1934, 120.

² For curses in the ancient world more generally, both in literature and everyday life, see L. WATSON, *Arae: the Curse Poetry of Antiquity*, ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 26, Leeds 1991.

emotions³. Hence an actor who wanted to make his part more dramatic might add lines to an already existing curse, or even add a curse where none was present in the original.

The following examples have been chosen to illustrate this. Not all the deletions are equally certain. I begin with what I regard as the most secure instances, and work from them to passages where the case for interpolation is not as strong. Taken cumulatively, however, I hope that the examples are instructive. They do not show that all curses in tragedy have been interpolated or lengthened by interpolation, nor is it my intention to argue this. Rather, they suggest that when dealing with curses in literature, a scholar should be especially sensitive to any sign that an interpolation has taken place⁴.

1. Euripides, *Hecuba* 438-43

οἱ ἄγω, προλείπω, λύεται δέ μου μέλη.

ὦ θύγατερ, ἄψαι μητρός, ἔκτεινον χέρα,

δός, μὴ λίπηις μ' ἄπαιδ'. ἀπωλόμην, φίλοι. 440

³ Cf. E. STEHLE, Prayer and curse in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, CP 100, 2005, 101-22, at 112:

'curses may use language that is as devastating as possible'.

⁴ For Aeschylus I refer to the editions of D. L. PAGE, Oxford 1972, and M. L. WEST, revised impression, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1998; for Sophocles, to P. H. J. LLOYD-JONES and N. G. WILSON, revised impression, Oxford 1992, and R. D. DAWE, Leipzig ¹1975-9, ²1984, Stuttgart and Leipzig ³1996; for Euripides, to J. DIGGLE, Oxford 1981-94, and D. KOVACS, London and Cambridge, Mass. 1994-2002. I also regularly cite two book of notes on the text of Sophocles by P. H. J. LLOYD-JONES and N. G. WILSON: *Sophoclea: Studies on the Text of Sophocles*, Oxford 1990, and *Sophocles: Second Thoughts*, Hypomnemata 100, Göttingen 1997. Other editions and commentaries used are detailed in the footnotes.

ὥς τὴν Λάκαιναν σύγγονον Διοσκόροιν

Ἑλένην ἴδοιμι· διὰ καλῶν γὰρ ὁμμάτων

αἴσχιστα Τροίαν εἶλε τὴν εὐδαίμονα.

Hartung deleted lines 441-3⁵; in his edition DIGGLE attributes the deletion to DINDORF, although he corrects the mistake in his collected papers⁶. Among modern editors DIGGLE and COLLARD⁷ eject the lines, while DAITZ⁸, KOVACS and GREGORY⁹ retain them. For GREGORY, the disputed lines ‘testify to Hecuba’s unbroken spirit’¹⁰; for COLLARD, ‘the interpolation is self-evident, an actor’s theatrical “improvement”’. Who is right?

The lines are linguistically acceptable. COLLARD calls ὥς = οὕτως in 441 ‘a contextually incongruous Epicism’, but for examples of this word in tragedy see PAGE on Eur. *Med.* 777-9¹¹ and KOVACS’s discussion of the passage¹². The unusual idea of Helen capturing Troy with her eyes is paralleled by Eur. *Tro.* 772-3 καλλίστων γὰρ

⁵ J. A. HARTUNG, *Euripidis Iphigenia in Aulide*, Erlangen 1837, 15.

⁶ J. DIGGLE, *Euripidea: Collected Essays*, Oxford 1994, 520.

⁷ C. COLLARD, *Euripides. Hecuba*, Warminster 1991.

⁸ S. G. DAITZ, *Euripides. Hecuba*, Leipzig 1973.

⁹ J. GREGORY, *Euripides: Hecuba*, APA Textbook Series 14, Atlanta 1999. Gregory erroneously retains the attribution to DINDORF.

¹⁰ GREGORY here cites W. STEIDLE, *Studien zum antiken Drama. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Bühnenspiels*, *Studia et Testimonia Antiqua* 4, Munich 1968, 45-6.

¹¹ D. L. PAGE, *Euripides. Medea*, Oxford 1938.

¹² D. KOVACS, *Euripidea Altera*, *Mnemosyne Supplement* 161, Leiden, New York, Cologne 1996, 62.

ὁμμάτων ἄπο / αἰσχροῦς τὰ κλεινὰ πεδί' ἀπώλεσας Φρυγῶν¹³. This parallel does not prove that the lines are authentic, however: on the contrary, an interpolator could easily have adapted this striking phrase from the *Troades* (a play similar in many ways to the *Hecuba*), just as the long-winded reference to Helen in 441-2 ('the Laconian woman, the sister of the Dioscuri, Helen') might be adapted from *Tro.* 34-5 ἡ Λάκαινα Τυνδαρίς / Ἑλένη ('the Laconian woman, the daughter of Tyndaris, Helen'); note the similar enjambment in each.

The real reason for suspecting the lines is that they do not fit the context. In this episode Hecuba becomes progressively more distraught at the prospect of losing her daughter Polyxena. Then, at the very moment that she loses her, she climactically ends with the words ἀπωλόμην, φίλαι. This is a fitting and moving conclusion to the scene¹⁴, and is probably accompanied by the queen physically collapsing onto the floor¹⁵. A subsequent curse on Helen would break this mood of grief. The time for

¹³ GREGORY compares the passages collected by A. C. PEARSON, Phrixus and Demodice. A note on Pindar, *Pyth.* IV. 162f., CR 23, 1920, 255-7, at 256-7, but nothing there approaches the boldness of a woman capturing a city by means of her eyes.

¹⁴ KOVACS (n. 12), pp. 61-2 argues that Hecuba does not actually faint here, and therefore is in a position to speak 441-3. This is debatable: she does not speak for 16 lines after the beginning of the next episode, and her first speech (501-2) indicates that she has not heard the chorus's Ταλθύβιε at 487. It also suggests that Talthybius is physically awakening her (τίς ο τοσ σῶμα τοῦμὸν οὐκ ἔῃ / κείσθαι; τί κινεῖς μ', ὅστις εἴ, λυπουμένην;). But even if Kovacs is right, Hecuba does not need to faint for her words to have a closural effect.

¹⁵ According to J. M. MOSSMAN, *Wild Justice: a Study of Euripides' Hecuba*, Oxford 1995, 57, Hecuba lowers her head with these words, only to raise it slightly to deliver 441-3 after a momentary pause, and

revenge has not yet come¹⁶; for now, the play concentrates on Hecuba's sorrow. In KOVACS's words, 'it seems out of place for Hecuba to turn her mind from the grief at hand and curse someone who is such a remote cause of her misery'¹⁷.

The phrase ἀπωλόμην, φίλαι works well as a closural device¹⁸, just as at Soph. *Phil.* 1217 Philoctetes ends his lyric lament with the words ἔτ' οὐδέν εἰμι. As

finally to sink down in despair. Cf. STEIDLE (n. 10), p. 46: 'Gespielt kann das nur so sein, daß die Zusammengebrochene noch einmal den Körper oder wenigstens den Kopf aufrichtet, um den Rachewunsch zu äußern'. The jerkiness of this stage action, with Hecuba moving down, up and then down again, is powerful testimony to the intrusive nature of 441-3.

¹⁶ Cf. the end of the second episode of Sophocles' *Electra*, which ends with the heroine in despair at the loss of her brother (817-22). She later raises the prospect of retaliation (938-9); but for her to do so at 822 would only obscure the extremity of her sorrow.

¹⁷ KOVACS (n. 12), p. 62. This powerful condemnation in fact comes from a defence of 441-3; KOVACS attempts to counter his all too eloquent argument by saying (with WEIL) that such faults are not rare in Euripides. Many people will not be satisfied by a case which rests so plainly on the alleged incompetence of the tragic poet.

¹⁸ MOSSMAN and STEIDLE attempt to show that ἀπωλόμην (vel sim.) near the end of a speech can be followed by a move to a new topic. Of the passages they mention, *Hipp.* 353-61 (cited by MOSSMAN (n. 15), p. 244) is quite different. There Phaedra's mention of Hippolytus causes the Nurse to break off in exclamations of horror. After this initial outbreak she masters herself sufficiently to name Kypriis as the cause of her mistress's trouble. By contrast, in our passage Hecuba's ἀπωλόμην, φίλαι comes as a climactic response to a trouble which has been hanging over the queen for some time. To move from this to a curse on Helen involves an odd shift in tone completely absent from the *Hippolytus* passage. MOSSMAN's other example, *Or.* 459, has ἀπωλόμην at the beginning, not the end, of a long speech and is therefore not comparable. STEIDLE (n. 10), p. 46 compares *Hclld.* 602-7 and *Andr.* 1077-8, but in neither of these passages is ἀπωλόμην followed by a substantive new point before the close of the speech.

TAPLIN notes, ‘this tragic phrase is found in contexts of death or fainting. *It is final*, and shows that Philoctetes goes quite independently of the approach of Odysseus and Neoptolemus’¹⁹. In each case, the introduction of a fresh point by the speaker would fatally weaken the dramatic effect. Yet ironically enough, the interpolated lines in the *Hecuba* were probably introduced in order to make the scene more dramatic. Whoever added them probably did so out of a belief that Hecuba’s concluding words were not impressive enough, and that a curse would make for a more powerful conclusion. Similarly mistaken motivations will be apparent in some of the other passages which I discuss.

2. Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 246-51

κατεύχομαι δὲ τὸν δεδρακότ', εἴτε τις
 εἷς ὧν λέληθεν εἴτε πλειόνων μέτα,
 κακὸν κακῶς νιν ἄμοιρον ἐκτρίψαι βίον.
 ἐπεύχομαι δ', οἴκοισιν εἰ ξυνέστιος
 ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς γένοιτ' ἐμοῦ ξυνειδότος, 250
 παθεῖν ἅπερ τοῖσδ' ἀρτίως ἡρασάμην.

According to the mediaeval manuscripts, the above lines come from Oedipus’ address to the Thebans at 216-75, a speech too long to quote in full. They were deleted

¹⁹ O. P. TAPLIN, Significant actions in Sophocles’ Philoctetes, GRBS 12, 1971, 25-44, at 39-40 (my italics). This passage too has attracted an interpolation, as Taplin convincingly demonstrates.

by WECKLEIN²⁰, whom LLOYD-JONES and WILSON follow in their edition²¹; REEVE also proposed the deletion²². In 236-43 Oedipus has pronounced a solemn interdict which forbids the people of Thebes from addressing or sharing religious celebrations with the target of the interdict (described in 236 simply as τὸν ἄνδρ' ἀπαυδῶ τοῦτον, ὅστις ἐστί). This target must be the murderer, as 813-20 prove (cf. also 350-3 and 1378-83) and as we would in any case expect. But as the passage follows a section in which Oedipus urges the Thebans not to conceal whatever they know about the crime, a careless reader could have assumed that Oedipus' target in 236-43 was the concealer, and so have added 246-51 to provide a curse against the killer (so REEVE, p. 165, LLOYD-JONES and WILSON, *Sophoclea* p. 86).

In 248 ἄμοιρον is unmetrical. PORSON's ἄμορον deals with that problem²³, although the sense of the word ('wretched', as at Hom. *Il.* 6.408, 24.773) is not found elsewhere in tragedy (where it always means 'lacking in'). Moreover, the whole style and tone of the lines are problematic: as LLOYD-JONES and WILSON note, '246-8 are suspiciously perfunctory, and ... 249-51 look like a feeble attempt to import more dramatic irony' (*Second Thoughts* pp. 50-1). In comparison with the forceful interdict of 236-43, 246-51 appear trite and unnecessary. As in the *Hecuba* passage, a curse has been

²⁰ N. WECKLEIN, *Sophoclis Tragoediae*, Leipzig 1880 (revision of E. WUNDER's edition).

²¹ Contrast PAGE's view that there are no cases of histrionic interpolation in the *Ajax* or the *OR* (n. 1, pp. 85-6).

²² M. D. REEVE, Interpolation in Greek tragedy, III, GRBS 14, 1973, 145-71, at 163-5.

²³ R. PORSON, *Euripidis Hecuba*, London 1797, on p. xiii. It is not clear why LLOYD-JONES and WILSON cite the conjecture from the 1808 edition; nor why they say that it is found in Porson's note on line 11 of the play (it is in fact found on *page* xi of that edition).

interpolated with the aim of making Oedipus' speech still more powerful and impressive.²⁴

Two scholars have recently attempted to defend the lines. Both ERBSE²⁵ and CARAWAN²⁶ claim that 236-43 are an interdict on both the killer and the person who conceals him, and hence we need a specific curse against the killer in 246-51. So according to CARAWAN 'the tyrant has made the sanctions explicit because he is extending them beyond their ordinary scope to encompass those who harbor the killer'; 236-43 thus display what he calls an 'artful ambiguity'. But as LLOYD-JONES and WILSON point out in *Second Thoughts* (p. 50), τὸν ἄνδρ' ἀπαυδῶ τοῦτον, ὅστις ἐστὶ must refer to a single man. The phrase is highly emphatic, with the accusative noun put before the verb at the start of the phrase, and with no fewer than five words in the line which stress the singularity of Oedipus' target. Sophocles could not have made it clearer that Oedipus was talking about one person. In the context that person must be

²⁴ DAWE attempted to deal with the problem by transposing 244-51 and 269-72: see his *Studies on the Text of Sophocles*, Leiden 1973-8, i. 221-6. An earlier anonymous scholar put 246-51 after 272. Neither change is convincing, however: the curse is problematic wherever it is placed, and the motive behind a transposition here is less obvious than that behind an interpolation.

DAWE (in his first edition) and LLOYD-JONES and WILSON attribute this change to a friend of DOBREE. DOBREE in fact ascribes the transposition to 'Anon. Cant. apud Dalzel' (*Adversaria*, ed. J. SCHOLEFIELD, Cambridge 1833-43, ii. 32; DAWE corrects his mistake in his second edition). This is presumably ANDREW DALZEL (1742-1806), though I have not discovered the reference. His edition of the *Oedipus Rex* was published in Edinburgh in 1832 by GEORGE DUNBAR, and may have incorporated material accessible to DOBREE (who died in 1825).

²⁵ H. ERBSE, *Sophokles über die geistige Blindheit des Menschen*, ICS 18, 1993, 57-71, at 69.

²⁶ E. CARAWAN, *The edict of Oedipus (Oedipus Tyrannus 223-51)*, AJP 120, 1999, 187-222, at 208.

the murderer, not the concealer. The claim that it can refer to both simultaneously is no more convincing than CARAWAN's argument (pp. 213-14) that in 362 φονέα σέ φημι τάνδρὸς ο ζητεῖς κυρεῖν ('I say that thou art the slayer of the man whose slayer thou seekest' – Jebb)²⁷ Tiresias is accusing Oedipus not of being the murderer, but of being 'guilty as the killer', referring to the 'crime of illicit association'. No member of an audience could have taken φονέα here in any other sense than 'murderer', just as in 236-43 no member of an audience could have thought that Oedipus' target was anyone other than the murderer.

3. Sophocles, *Ajax* 831-44

τοσαῦτά σ', ὦ Ζεῦ, προστρέπω, καλῶ δ' ἅμα
πομπαῖον Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον εὖ με κοιμίσαι,
ξὺν ἀσφαδάστῳ καὶ ταχεῖ πηδήματι
πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τῷδε φασγάνῳ.
καλῶ δ' ἄρωγούς τας ἀεὶ τε παρθένους 835
ἀεὶ θ' ὀρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη,
σεμνὰς Ἑρινὺς τανύποδας, μαθεῖν ἐμὲ
πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὡς διόλλυμαι τάλας.
καὶ σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους
ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμὲ 840

²⁷ R. C. JEBB, *Sophocles. The Plays and Fragments. Part I. The Oedipus Tyrannus*, Cambridge 1883, p. 83.

αὐτοσφαγῇ πίπτοντα· τῶς αὐτοσφαγεῖς
πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων ὀλοίατο.
ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἑρινύες,
γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.

LLOYD-JONES and WILSON adopt WESSELING's deletion of 839-42²⁸, whereas PEARSON²⁹, tentatively supported by WEST³⁰, deletes only αὐτοσφαγεῖς / πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων; BOTHE³¹ adopts a middle course by deleting 841-2, but this is less likely, as it leaves ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμέ as too abrupt a phrase. Even the highly conservative critics BREMER and VAN ERP TAALMAN KIP³² agree that the words bracketed by PEARSON should go: the form φιλίστων is not classical Greek, while a scholium on 841 indicates that the phrase τῶς αὐτοσφαγεῖς was doubted in antiquity

²⁸ PETRUS WESSELING (1692-1764). LLOYD-JONES and WILSON (*Sophoclea* p. 28) incorrectly give the date of his death as 1769. Many scholars have accepted this deletion: to the list in *Sophoclea* add J. DIGGLE, review of H. MUSURILLO, *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in the Dramatic Poetry of Sophocles* (Leiden 1967), CR N.S. 19, 1969, 153-5, at 155 ('the indubitable interpolation'); A. F. GARVIE, *Sophocles. Ajax*, Warminster 1998; T. K. HUBBARD, The architecture of Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Hermes* 131, 2003, 158-71, at 163 n. 19.

²⁹ A. C. PEARSON, *Sophoclis Fabulae*, Oxford 1924.

³⁰ M. L. WEST, review of the first volume of the Teubner edition of Sophocles by R. D. DAWE (1975), *Gnomon* 50, 1978, 236-43, at 240.

³¹ F. H. Bothe, *Sophoclis dramata quae supersunt et deperditorum fragmenta*, Leipzig and London, 1806.

³² J. M. BREMER and A. M. VAN ERP TAALMAN KIP, review of the Sophocles OCT by LLOYD-JONES and WILSON (1990), *Mnemosyne* 4th ser. 47, 1994, 236-44, at 239.

(p. 192 CHRISTODOULOU³³ ≈ p. 72.13-14 PAPAGEORGIUS³⁴ ταῦτα νενοθεῦσθαί φασιν, ὑποβληθέντα πρὸς σαφήνειαν τῶν λεγομένων). But there are good grounds for going further than PEARSON. The scholium just cited says that τῶς as well as αὐτοσφαγεῖς was suspected in antiquity, although PEARSON deletes only the latter. The words σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους read like empty padding: cf. κακὸν κακῶς in the interpolated curse in the *OR* passage above. It is also awkward that Ajax's curse on the whole army in 843-4 (which will be abundantly fulfilled by Athena after the rape of Cassandra) should be accompanied by a curse on the Atreidae in 839-42 which is only brought to pass in part (Agamemnon is killed by his kin, Menelaus is not).

In support of PEARSON's deletion, WEST asks whether ὀλοίατο is the sort of form which would occur to an interpolator. This ending is common enough, however: LAUTENSACH³⁵ counts twenty-nine instances of the 3rd plural in -ατο in tragedy and comedy. BREMER and VAN ERP TAALMAN KIP prefer PEARSON's deletion to WESSELING's on the grounds that it involves a loss of one line, not four. But PEARSON's deletion involves the loss of bits of two lines, which implies a considerably more involved interpolation than simply adding a single line. BREMER and VAN ERP TAALMAN KIP rely on an assumption that an instance of *Binneninterpolation* lasting one

³³ G. A. CHRISTODOULOU, *Τὰ ἀρχαῖα σχόλια εἰς Αἴαντα τοῦ Σοφοκλέους*, Βιβλιοθήκη Σοφίας Ν. Σαριπολίου 34, Athens 1977.

³⁴ P. N. PAPAGEORGIUS, *Scholia in Sophoclis Tragoedias Vetera*, Leipzig 1888.

³⁵ O. LAUTENSACH, Grammatische Studien zu den attischen Tragikern und Komikern. Konjunktiv und Optativ, *Glotta* 7, 1916, 92-116, at 114-15.

line is more likely than an interpolation of four continuous lines, but they do not provide evidence for this.

4. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1598-1602

κᾶπειτ' ἐπιγνοῦς ἔργον οὐ καταΐσιον
ιμωξεν, ἀμπίπτει δ' ἀπὸ σφαγῆν ἐρῶν,
μόρον δ' ἄφερτον Πελοπίδαις ἐπεύχεται 1600
λάκτισμα δείπνου ξυνδίκως τιθεῖς ἄρᾱι,
οὔτως ὀλέσθαι πᾶν τὸ Πλεισθένους γένος.

Line 1600 was first deleted by SCHMITT³⁶, and then independently by WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF³⁷. In his monumental commentary on the play FRAENKEL also ejects the line, and adds fresh arguments against its authenticity³⁸. More recently the tendency has been to keep it in the text, as DENNISTON-PAGE³⁹, PAGE and WEST have all done. SCHMITT's only argument is that Aegisthus cannot curse the whole house of Pelops, since he himself is a member of that house. This is too literal-minded to count as a real objection, however. More serious is the case set out by FRAENKEL. The line constitutes a 'weakening anticipation' of the curse in 1602, and interrupts an

³⁶ J. C. SCHMITT, *Observationes Criticae in Aeschyli Agamemnonem*, Programm Mannheim, 1859, 8-9.

³⁷ U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Aeschyli Tragoediae*, Berlin 1914.

³⁸ E. D. M. FRAENKEL, *Aeschylus. Agamemnon*, Oxford 1950.

³⁹ J. D. DENNISTON and D. L. PAGE, *Aeschylus. Agamemnon*, Oxford 1957. WATSON's discussion of the passage (n. 2, p. 15 n. 71) simply refers to the discussions of FRAENKEL and DENNISTON-PAGE.

otherwise tautly constructed sequence of violent actions (the groan, the spewing out of the blood, the kicking of the table). We may contrast how the curse in 1602 is closely linked to the overturning of the table in 1601, thereby effecting what WATSON calls the ‘parallelism between the words of the curse and the action which accompanies it’⁴⁰. Moreover, μόρον ἄφερτον ‘intolerable death’ is an odd expression, as DENNISTON and PAGE acknowledge *ad loc.* The sense which we require is ‘intolerable fate’, but μόρος in Aeschylus always means ‘death’, never ‘fate’ (see FRAENKEL on *Ag.* 1146). This is the sort of error which is conceivable as the mistake of an interpolator attempting to write Aeschylean Greek without success. Lastly, the phrases Πελοπίδαις and Πλεισθένους γένος are also too close for comfort, and awkwardly give two different designations to the same family⁴¹.

As PAGE remarks in a different context, ‘the cumulative effect of different slight offences must be seriously regarded’⁴². The curse of Thyestes is a favourite part of the Atreid legend⁴³, so it is not surprising that its occurrence in Aeschylus should have attracted attention and amplification. The desire to lengthen a curse may be added to FRAENKEL’s preferred motivation, that of supplying a *verbum dicendi*⁴⁴.

We may note in passing that the Thyestean feast is also the subject of interpolation at Eur. *Or.* 15 ἔδαισε δ’ οὖν νιν τέκν’ ἀποκτείνας Ἀτρεΰς, a line

⁴⁰ WATSON (n. 2), p. 51 with n. 254.

⁴¹ Cf. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF’s comment *ad loc.*: ‘eandem gentem duobus nominibus eodem loco appellare vesanum est’.

⁴² D. L. PAGE (n. 1), p. 58.

⁴³ For other Thyestean curses cf. Enn. *Thy.* 296-9 JOCELYN, Sen. *Thy.* 1110-11.

⁴⁴ See his commentary (n. 38), vol. iii. p. 756 with n. 1.

deleted by J. MARKLAND⁴⁵. Electra's words τί τᾶρρητ' ἀναμετρήσασθαί με δεῖ; (14) and τὰς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ σιγῷ τύχας (16) are patently absurd if they surround a reference to the very event which she disclaims to mention. A famous conflict like this was especially prone to elaboration (as in the *Agamemnon* passage) or to wholesale interpolation (as here). As WILLINK remarks⁴⁶, 'no doubt the interpolator could not endure that the famous Banquet should go unmentioned'. WEST keeps the line⁴⁷, but DI BENEDETTO⁴⁸, WILLINK and DIGGLE all eject it.

5. Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 791-8

ὦ ξένη Κεφαλλήν, εἴθε σοῦ διαμπερὲς
 στέρνων ἴκοιτ' ἄλγησις ἥδε. φεῦ, παπαῖ.
 παπαῖ μάλ' αὔθις. ὦ διπλοῖ στρατηλάται,
 Ἀγάμεμνον, ὦ Μενέλαε, πῶς ἂν ἄντ' ἐμοῦ
 τὸν ἴσον χρόνον τρέφοιτε τήνδε τὴν νόσον; 795

⁴⁵ This is reported by G. BURGESS, *Marklandi Notae Mss. in Euripidem*, *The Classical Journal* vol. 25, 1822, 339-43, at 341.

⁴⁶ C. W. WILLINK, *Euripides. Orestes*, Oxford 1986.

⁴⁷ M. L. WEST, *Euripides: Orestes*, Warminster 1987. He argues that 'the question would be feeble as a way of leaving the subject, and 16 would read awkwardly as the next line'. Rather, the question is an effective *praeteritio*, while the transition from 14 to 16 is smoother than from 14 to 15, with its clumsy δ' οὖν.

⁴⁸ V. DI BENEDETTO, *Euripidis Orestes*, Florence 1965.

μοι μοι.

ὦ θάνατε θάνατε, πῶς αἰ καλούμενος

οὔτω κατ' ἡμαρ οὐ δύνη μολεῖν ποτε;

PHILIPP's deletion of 794⁴⁹ (later suggested by HERWERDEN⁵⁰) is advocated by WEST⁵¹ and adopted by LLOYD-JONES and WILSON in their Oxford Classical Text. DAWE keeps the line. WEST argues that ὦ διπλοῖ στρατηλάται, / 'Αγάμεμνον, ὦ Μενέλαε is clumsy Greek; he also notes that Odysseus is not named in the immediately preceding curse in 791-2, and compares 263-5 and *Aj.* 388-91 for this trio appearing unnamed in a vituperative context. πῶς in 794 was probably suggested by the same word in 797, and again ruins the parallelism with 791-2 by turning 793-5 into a question rather than a wish. Finally, for the superfluity of ἀντ' ἐμοῦ WEST points to 1113-15 ἰδοίμαν δέ νιν, / τὸν τάδε μῆσάμενον, τὸν ἴσον χρόνον / ἐμὰς λαχόντ' ἀνίας.

In *Second Thoughts* LLOYD-JONES and WILSON almost recant their support for the deletion. They first object (p. 110) to what they call WEST's 'logicality'. This objection confuses two things. Agreed, textual critics sometimes go astray by seeking to impose strict logic on a literary text⁵²; but if texts can be illogical, it does not follow that

⁴⁹ E. PHILIPP, *Der jambische Trimeter und sein Bau bei Sophokles*, Prague 1879 [non vidi].

⁵⁰ H. VAN HERWERDEN, *Epistola Critica ad Augustum Nauckium*, *Mnemosyne* N.S. 17, 1889, 242-74, at 255.

⁵¹ M. L. WEST, *Tragica* VII, *BICS* 31, 1984, 171-96, at 185.

⁵² Cf. D. L. PAGE's remark to R. D. DAWE: 'you treat Aeschylus as if he were Aristotle' (ap. R. D. DAWE, *Miscellanea Critica*, *CPh* 83, 1988, 97-111, at 106).

the arguments of textual critics ought to be so too. If the worst that can be said of WEST's case is that it is logical, we may be tempted to believe that it is also right. LLOYD-JONES and WILSON also claim that 'the rhythm may be clumsy and the names unnecessary, but the line is not ineffective ... and 795 seems a little bald without it'. This is hardly a ringing endorsement. 795 rather comes with greater force when it is unencumbered by the dull 794. The interpolation was probably motivated by a desire to include the names of Philoctetes' enemies; but we can also see here another example of a curse amplified and expanded out of a mistaken belief that greater length (and greater precision) leads to greater force.

6. Euripides, *Hippolytus* 659-68

νῦν δ' ἐκ δόμων μέν, ἔστ' ἂν ἐκδημῇ χθονὸς

Θησεύς, ἄπειμι, σῖγα δ' ἔξομεν στόμα· 660

θεάσομαι δὲ σὺν πατρὸς μολῶν ποδὶ

πῶς νιν προσόψῃ, καὶ σὺ καὶ δέσποινα σή.

τῆς σῆς δὲ τόλμης εἶσομαι γεγευμένος.

ὄλοισθε. μισῶν δ' οὔποτ' ἐμπλησθήσομαι

γυναῖκας, οὐδ' εἴ φησί τίς μ' ἀεὶ λέγειν· 665

ἀεὶ γὰρ οὖν πῶς εἰσι κάκεῖναι κακαί.

ἢ νῦν τις αὐτὰς σωφρονεῖν διδαξάτω

ἢ κἄμ' ἐάτω ταῖσδ' ἐπεμβαίνειν ἀεὶ.

HERWERDEN first suspected 663⁵³, and BARRETT first deleted it⁵⁴; his arguments are accepted by DIGGLE, STOCKERT⁵⁵, KOVACS and HALLERAN⁵⁶. VALCKENAER first suspected 664-8⁵⁷; modern editors (BARRETT, DIGGLE, STOCKERT, KOVACS, HALLERAN) all keep the lines, though not without considerable misgivings. The best case against 664-8 is set out by KOVACS⁵⁸. He notes that instead of μισῶν ‘hating’ in 664 we need a verb meaning ‘reviling’, since οὐδ’ εἴ φησί τις μ’ ἀεὶ λέγειν implies an act of denunciation rather than a state of mind⁵⁹. καῖκεῖναι in 666 is also awkward, as ‘the position of καί suggests that women share the quality of vileness with someone else’. The emphatic γὰρ οὖν is pointless in this context⁶⁰; while for πῶς as ‘a make-weight for inept versifiers’ Kovacs compares Soph. *Aj.* 327, which is deleted by both

⁵³ H. VAN HERWERDEN, *Euripidea*, Mnemosyne 4, 1855, 358-82, at 372.

⁵⁴ W. S. BARRETT, *Euripides*. Hippolytos. Oxford 1964.

⁵⁵ W. STOCKERT, *Euripides*. Hippolytus, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1994.

⁵⁶ M. R. HALLERAN, *Euripides*. Hippolytus, Warmington 1995, on 663-8.

⁵⁷ L. C. VALCKENAER, *Euripidis Hippolytus*, Leiden 1768, p. 237.

⁵⁸ D. KOVACS, *Coniectanea Euripidea*, GRBS 29, 1988, 115-34, at 125. Surprisingly, KOVACS does not bracket the lines in his Loeb edition (1995); in his *Euripidea Altera* (n. 12), p. 30 he merely refers to his article without explaining his change of mind.

⁵⁹ BARTHOLD made the same point: ‘μισεῖν und λέγειν entsprechen sich nicht’ (in his edition, *Ausgewählte Tragödien des Euripides*. Viertes Bändchen: *Hippolytus*, Berlin ¹1880, on 664-68).

⁶⁰ On this combination see J. D. DENNISTON, *The Greek Particles*, revised by K. J. DOVER, Oxford ²1954, 445-8.

DAWE and LLOYD-JONES and WILSON⁶¹. These three separate faults give us a line meaning ‘for always, in fact, they too are in some way evil’, which does not ring true. In addition to these linguistic oddities, the general sense of the lines is also problematic. In his apparatus DIGGLE points out ‘certe ex Hippolyti sententia (79 seqq.) σωφροσύνη non discendo capitur’. While logical consistency is not an absolute virtue in literary texts, here Hippolytus is contradicting himself with such vehemence and to so little purpose that we may justly add this inconcinnity to an already lengthy list of objections. Finally, the lines are awkwardly placed. Hippolytus has moved from a general attack on women (616-48) to a specific reference to the offence which Phaedra has attempted through the Nurse (649-52). In the final part of the speech, he reveals what he is going to do now (653-62). To turn back now to a general denunciation of women is false to the movement of the speech, which for all its passion is carefully ordered.

Defences of the passage have not been convincing. HALLERAN keeps it, while commenting ‘662 provides a neat exit line for Hipp.’, and ‘after what has preceded [664-8] might seem somewhat frigid’⁶². This reads more like a case for deletion rather than retention; using a similar argument, DAVIES⁶³ advocates the removal of 664-8 on the grounds that ‘verse 662 provides an excellent climax, representing as it does the extreme opposite in specificity of the speech’s opening generalities’. WILLINK defends them, claiming that ‘667-8 are indispensable as yet another calculated ambiguity:

⁶¹ KOVACS in fact cites ‘Soph. *Aj.* 827’, which is a false reference.

⁶² Cf. VALCKENAER’s ‘mihi saltem hoc in loco valde frigidi videntur’.

⁶³ M. DAVIES, ‘The man who surpassed all men in virtue’: Euripides’ *Hippolytus* and the balance of sympathies, *WS* 113, 2000, 53-69, at 63.

Phaedra concludes from ταῖσδ' ἐπεμβάινειν ἄεί that Hippolytus is a self-confessed enemy, and that since σωφρονεῖν διδάξάτω is impossible in her case, she is bound to be exposed on Theseus' return'⁶⁴. But Hippolytus' reaction to the Nurse's overtures has been such that Phaedra hardly needs 668 to gather that her step-son is not well-disposed towards her.

WILLINK in fact provides the correct diagnosis of the problem when he refers to the passage as 'lines of comparatively routine cursing'. They were tagged onto the end of the speech, probably by an actor eager to better Euripides by providing a still more furious conclusion to the harangue. After all, what could be more dramatic than a closing curse? Nor is this the only interpolation attracted by Hippolytus' denunciation of women: BOTHE's deletion of 625-6⁶⁵ and BARTHOLD's of 634-7⁶⁶ are accepted by BARRETT, DIGGLE, STOCKERT, KOVACS and HALLERAN. The whole speech can be regarded as an extended diatribe which later actors or scribes wished to amplify with indifferent material.

7. Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1045-50

⁶⁴ C. W. WILLINK, Some problems of text and interpretation in the *Hippolytus*, CQ N.S. 18, 1968, 11-43, at 30.

⁶⁵ The attribution is owed to DIGGLE (n. 6), 519, who points out that the conjecture is found in the notes to F. H. BOTHE's German translation of Euripides, published 1800-3 in Berlin and Stettin. The relevant conjecture dates to 1802.

⁶⁶ TH. BARTHOLD, Kritisch-exegetische Bemerkungen zum Hippolytus des Euripides, RhM n.F. 31, 1876, 313-40, at 337-8; then also in his edition (n. 59).

ὥς ἄξιον τόδ' εἶπας. οὐχ οὕτω θανῆι, 1045
 ὥσπερ σὺ σαυτῷ τόνδε προύθηκας νόμον·
 ταχὺς γὰρ ᾿Αιδης ῥᾷστος ἀνδρὶ δυστυχεῖ·
 ἀλλ' ἐκ πατρώιας φυγὰς ἀλητεύων χθονὸς
 ξένην ἐπ' αἶαν λυπρὸν ἀντλήσεις βίον.
 μισθὸς γὰρ οὗτος ἐστὶν ἀνδρὶ δυσσεβεῖ. 1050

Cursing may provide the context for a second interpolation in Euripides' play. BERGK⁶⁷ deleted line 1049, NAUCK⁶⁸ 1049 and 1050; BARRETT, DIGGLE, STOCKERT and HALLERAN delete 1050, while KOVACS follows NAUCK. Thus all editors delete 1050, the authenticity of which was already doubted in antiquity⁶⁹, and which in BARRETT's words 'is too similar to 1047 for comfort'; see further his note. 1049 is more interesting from our perspective, and is the more controversial of the two deletions. The line may have been copied from 898, where exactly the same words appear (except that we find ἀντλήσει in place of ἀντλήσεις). In that passage Theseus is describing what will happen to his son now that he has been cursed – he declares that Hippolytus will either be struck down by Poseidon or will leave the land as a wandering exile. If 1049 is

⁶⁷ TH. BERGK, review of W. DINDORF's *Poetae Scenici Graeci* (1830), *Zeitschrift für die Alterthumswissenschaft* (sometimes known as 'Zimmermann's Zeitschrift') 1. ser. 2: 945-68 [non vidi].

⁶⁸ J. A. NAUCK, *Tragoediae superstites et deperditarum fragmenta*, Leipzig 1854, and then in *Euripideische Studien*, Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg, VII^e sér., 1.12 and 5.6, St. Petersburg 1859-62, vol. ii. p. 41.

⁶⁹ Cf. Σ 1050 ἐν πολλοῖς οὐ φέρεται οὗτος ὁ ἴαμβος (= E. SCHWARTZ, *Scholia in Euripidem*, Berlin 1887-91, ii. 115.3).

spurious, the interpolator has decided to amplify our passage by borrowing from the earlier passage concerning the curse, whose ferocity was such that it was an obvious target for an interpolator in search of particularly violent language. We cannot be sure that the line is spurious. HALLERAN remarks that ‘the repeated verse underscores Th.’s intransigence: Hipp.’s words have had no impact on him’, while BARRETT doubts the construction which results if Theseus’ speech ends at 1048: but there is no reason why οὔτω in 1045 could not stand parallel to ἀλητεύων in 1048. Nevertheless, the association of curses with interpolations demonstrated elsewhere in this paper provides a further weapon in the armoury of those who believe that NAUCK’s deletion is right.

As recently as 1987 TARRANT could declare ‘the study of interpolation, despite its long and contentious history, is in some respects only now beginning’⁷⁰. I hope that this article has made a contribution to this fertile field of scholarship – by demonstrating that curses are especially liable to interpolation, and by encouraging other scholars to be on their guard against other examples of the phenomenon.

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⁷⁰ R. J. TARRANT, *Toward a typology of interpolation in Latin poetry*, TAPA 117, 1987, 281-98, at 298.